2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

361 that point has no further permanent habitations of the Bush
103 Negroes. Past the realm of the Aucaners on the Lawa River (the confluence of which with the Tapanahoni goes to form the Marowyne) we find the continuation of the Boni tribe, consisting of the villages of Tahbiki, Pulumuffo, the seat of the Granman, Loka, Papai-Seton, Agodai, Komuntibo, Cottica (the only Boni village on Dutch territory, but whose inhabitants also owe allegiance to the French), Akuba, and the last of all the Bush Negro villages, Assisi, past the mouth of the far Assisi Creek.

177 The Bonis, although the most remote of the Bush Negroes from the plantations from which they originally escaped as slaves, have certainly succumbed the most to the influences of the white civilization. Even the village of the Saramaccaner tribe, Santi Gron, only some twenty miles from Paramaribo, maintains in true aboriginal fashion its African customs and its heathen gods.

797 The French Catholic priests have been more successful in making converts among the Boni than have the Dutch among the other tribes. In one village, however, we saw the usual heathen fetishes on full display, but we were told that they only afforded real protection to those who *believed* in them. Some of these tribesmen wear trousers and the headcloth of the French Guiana Town Negroes. We have even heard it whispered that some of the Boni own shoes, which
● [689] is an unspeakable offence against the code among any of the other tribes.

Although the huts are of Africanesque architecture, similar

/16 cont./

868 The children learn their dances and games at a very early
858 age and are always present at the festivals.

867 From earliest youth on they are taught to respect and
689 venerate older persons; offenses against this obligatory respect are severely punished.

868 The boys in particular are taken along to the forest at an early age and remain there in connection with the processing of wood or other operations, as well as for hunting and fishing, and very quickly learn to swim.

515 Men, women, and children bathe separately in the river every day.

Chapter XI

Burial Services and Other Ceremonies

764 They celebrate the burial services with great solemnity. If one of them dies in Auca, that is, their land, then the corpse is cleaned, the nails are cut, and it is placed in a coffin, in which various and especially costly articles of clothing of the deceased are placed and to which all the relatives also add a new piece of cloth (usually blankets and pantjes) as remembrances, a farewell token on which much value is placed. Hence they always take care to have a sufficient stock of new and unused cloths.

Ordinarily the corpse lies in the open coffin for one day before the interment takes place, in order to bid it farewell. The relatives then sit around the coffin and weep ceaselessly /17/ in a mostly singsong manner peculiar to them, in which the visitors also join from time to time.

765 After the interment the closest blood relatives proceed to hold the days of mourning on a mat spread out on the ground for
[538] eight days. During this time they weep loudly by turns, at the same time making the strangest gestures, while day and night, generally by turns, little stories with many allusions, and always ending with a moral solution, are told.

/72 cont./

643 778 241 The grand man acts as land head for the whole of the tribe. It is he who has the care of the sanctuary of mama gɔ̃ and who prays each year in the presence of a large gathering of people for the fertility of the soil.

643 743 796 982 The grand man is the priest of Odun, divinity whom the Boni regard as avenger of offenses against moral and religious law; by virtue of this, he alone is qualified to administer the oath against wɔ̃i (sorcery) and to implore the mercy of Odun toward those who have gone against his laws by fighting with arms.

643 152 In his religious functions this usually weak and unobtrusive man acts with sovereign authority and assurance, and we have several times seen people tremble before him.

643 681 [623] If someone has seriously transgressed the customary laws, or if he has stolen, committed adultery, given blows, poured forth serious insults or curses, the grand man inflicts on him punishment proportional to the gravity of the offense, such as making planks, /73/ a boat, pounding rice (if it is a woman). The product of the punishment is acquired by the grand man, as are the fines in money which he imposes in less serious cases.

643 685 For example in October, 1952, two adolescents of Boniville, Awétipay and Adyuka, were surprised while they were trying to break into an inhabited house; the grand man sentenced them forthwith to three days of forced labor, in the course of which he made them clean the approaches to the village and collect for his benefit wood for heating.

643 689 462 He can also punish disobedient or disrespectful young men by making them do work reserved for women, such as weeding the approaches to the village and the removal of dog droppings.

643 681 The grand man can confine a man to Boni villages by forbidding him to go beyond l'Enfant Perdu to the north and Kormotibo to the south; that is called sitafa sama (sitafa • captive). The man concerned, deprived of means of earning his living, thus becomes dependent on his family until he makes honorable amends.

/15 cont./

C92 C85 [224] The Djuka had killed the tapir which had sunk. Pressed for time, he had had to leave, requesting the Asisi people to look for it.

The next day Pototo and Amusupé found the animal floating [251] [262] between two waters. They hid it in the bush and had it smoke-dried on their own behalf. They ate it with their wives (about 100 kilos of meat).

That ended up by becoming known, and a jealous man denounced them to the grand man.

Called before the Boni kuutu, they had to apologize and were each sentenced to pay as a fine to the grand man a demijohn of 15 liters of tafia (worth about 6,000 francs) within four months.

[1735] Both of them were at a loss to pay this fine, belonging to the category of no'er-do-wells who have no regular activity and live from day to day, selling some fish or game from time to time.

[413] Amusupé appealed to Captain Kondoku, head of his lineage, who agreed to pay for the tafia for him, Amusupé reimbursing him little by little.

[413] [589] As for Pototo, the head of his lineage refused categorically to help him because he had eaten the malpouri alone without allowing his family to share it (the village people would have found it normal to profit by the crime, but they deemed it immoral that one of their relatives had deprived them of meat). After three and [123] a half months, Pototo began to occupy himself seriously at a paid job which he had the luck to find because we needed a bosman for two weeks.

577 626 [522] The Boni did nothing but laugh while telling us this story. Affairs of this kind, which do not involve any supernatural intervention, escape in large measure their social morality; they have a certain feeling for what should be done, but submit to it only in proportion as they fear a material and immediate sanction.

/180 cont./

765 613 •687 An incident. In 1957, the Saramaka Gamba (75 years old), Way's widower (Dip. I), caused a serious incident by refusing several times the obedience he owed to the latter's lineage, on the pretext that he was old and knew how to behave.

His son Maliki (born of a Saramaka woman), whom he was raising, married to Way's daughter, had gone fishing above the Litani. Upon his return, Kwau (80 years old), Way's elder brother, reproached him for having left without authorization, pointing out that his father, Gamba, being placed under his authority by mourning, he was too, because of this fact. Gamba [578] did not accept this reasoning and the two old men fought. This [769] was a fine scandal. Kwau and the elders of Way's lineage came [798] before the fraga tiki of L'Enfant Perdu village to lift his mourn- [784] ing forthwith (which, let us recall, is the equivalent of cursing him by delivering him over to the vengeance of the dead woman's yɔrka).

Members of Way's family went to break up the shacks of Gamba and his son, who lived hidden in the bush for some time. [629] Then Gamba had the village heads intercede and obtained his [769] pardon. The elders of Way's lineage went to the fraga tiki to [798] utter the words putting things back in order.

765 Lifting of mourning. The festival of the lifting of mourning - puu baaka - is celebrated 18 months to two years after the burial. The delay may be a little longer, for most often the village celebrates this festival for several of its dead at the same time. It is a heavy burden, for festivals for lifting mourning attract many people and everyone present must find as much as he wishes to eat and drink.

[621] This festival is celebrated in the framework of the village and not in that of the lineage. It will be celebrated in the same way for a Djuka who died in a Boni village, provided that he lived there a sufficiently long time. In such a case the expenses

754 /246 cont./
755 The maître asked 2,000 francs from him as the price of
648 his consultation.

789 Curse. Someone who judges himself victim of evil-doing has at his disposal a supreme resource: /247/ cursing his adversary, that is, appealing directly to the supreme God, Masa Gadu, to ask him to punish his adversary. This is called seni gadu -- sending God -- against someone. To do that, while asking God to kill him or make him sick, one kneels and strikes the ground with both hands in the presence of the adversary or in front of his house. This act is regarded as totally different from wisi, for one is relying on the justice of God, who judges with equity and punishes only the guilty.

However that may be, cursing is for the Refugee Blacks a very serious act. It may happen that, feeling guilty, the source of the injustice asks pardon and promises to make amends for his misdeeds. The one who uttered the curse again implores Masa Gadu in order to take back the words he spoke: "He has given me satisfaction, do nothing against him." But oftener still it happens that a complicated affair is involved, that both parties concerned are persuaded of their legitimate [692] ground and curse each other. The case must then be carried before the grand man and straightened out at once or misfortunes [695] may pounce upon both lineages. The grand man judges without appeal and inflicts a punishment on the one who was wrong [778] on the main issue of the debate. Then he obliges the ad- [782] versaries to be reconciled before the fraga tiki, where the offering of tafia and water is made.

[828] The effect of these conceptions is to render nearly im- [754] possible hidden hatreds and rancors, which the Refugee Blacks fear very much, for they are the source of wisi.

688 In general, the act of getting angry in public and serious-
• 689 ly insulting somebody is considered as an offense against moral and religious law, capable of attracting misfortunes; it is an

688 /247 cont./
689 attenuated form of wisi; in serious cases the grand man may inflict a severe punishment on the guilty ones.

789 ɔbia. The Refugee Blacks use the word ɔbia (1) to designate

192 789 754 1. The term ɔbia is used by the Refugee Blacks when they are speaking to outsiders, to designate positive magic, but in reality this term has a very different meaning in their language. It designates any kind of magic action, negative as well as positive; likewise the term ɔbiamɛ has the sense of sorcerer as well as that of holder of a remedy.

192 The Boni among themselves use the word deesi, remedy, instead of ɔbia. They do not use the word deesimɛ in place of ɔbiamɛ. It is said, for example, of a man who knows the rites of a cult of possession "A sabi Papa gadu sani" (he knows the things of Papa gadu).

[989] The term gadumɛ designates one who is possessed of a god, and not one who knows how to bring on possession.

104 789 114 In the rest of this work we shall continue, nevertheless, to use the terms ɔbia and ɔbiamɛ to designate positive magic, in order to facilitate collation with the English- and Dutch-language authors who have used it in this sense.